



↓ General

Q When turning on my computer it frequently hangs during the Bios startup tests stating 'Verifying DMI pool data'. I then have to try a couple of times to restart it. Any suggestions?

A DMI stands for desktop management interface and it's supposed to be a way of managing desktop computers on large networks. However, this has little bearing on the problem you are experiencing. For some unknown reason, some computers can hang at startup while displaying this message. Usually the problem appears after adding or changing some item of hardware, or repartitioning a hard drive.

The problem is in the Bios, so you will need to access the Bios Setup screen to attempt to solve it. We would recommend writing down all of your system's current Bios settings before attempting any solution, because some of these settings will be changed temporarily while the problem is resolved. Note that the following instructions are generic, so you will have to exercise some common sense when applying them to your own computer.

To start, try setting the hard disk type to None or Not installed. Load the Bios defaults, then the Setup defaults. Save the Bios changes and reboot using a DOS system disk or Windows StartUp disk. After the system has finished booting, reboot again, re-enter Bios Setup and autodetect the hard drive. Ensure that LBA mode is selected if it was selected before. Save the changes and allow the system to reboot. Hopefully, it will now start normally.

Another suggestion is to try disabling the internal and external CPU cache (this option is usually found under Bios Features or Advanced Settings), saving the changes and rebooting using a floppy disk. Once you've done this, simply reboot again, enable the cache, save the changes and reboot normally.

Other factors that have been found to cause this problem are an interrupt – or IRQ – conflict between the IDE controller and ACPI. This shouldn't occur if the Bios Plug and Play OS option is set to Yes, so check this setting and change it if necessary. You may also find an option to control the setup of PCI Resources – try setting this to Automatic.

As you can see, this is a problem which people have solved by fiddling around with various Bios settings until it goes away. However, no one seems to know exactly what causes it.

Q Since upgrading my motherboard, I get a low battery warning. However, it's only three months since I replaced the battery. I have been told that I must enter the Bios setup and save the settings after replacing the battery, which I haven't done yet. But surely this wouldn't explain why the new battery lasts only a few weeks?

A You should enter Bios Setup and note down the settings before replacing the battery, then enter it again after you have installed the new one. This will allow you to reset any settings that have changed from their original values.

However, you are right that this doesn't explain why a new battery only lasts three months. The current drawn from the backup battery is usually so small that the battery should never need replacing during the useful life of the computer. By the time it expires, the computer has usually been thrown away because it is too old and slow to be worth using. The only explanation we can think of, unfortunately, is that there must be a fault on the motherboard that is causing the battery charge to leak away.

Q When I first got my new PC everything was fine, but after two days it started to hang during use. I performed a system restore and this cured the problem, but only for one day. Is the problem to do with memory or something else?

A It's impossible to say, but the symptoms you describe are more likely to be caused by a hardware problem – possibly a fault or perhaps overheating – than by software. Since it is a new PC and the fault seems easy to reproduce, we would advise that you get it fixed while the system is still under warranty.

Q My HP DeskJet 890c works fine on my Windows 98 PC but, when it is connected to my Windows XP machine, after a portion of a page has printed the DeskJet gives up and starts feeding blank pages through. Sometimes the blank pages have one or two lines of

symbols on them. I have to turn the printer off or remove the paper tray to stop it. Windows XP has a driver for my printer, and HP says there's no better version available. Can you help?

A It sounds like a data communication error between the PC and the printer. If a command is garbled, the printer will interpret what is supposed to be graphical data as text. This is why blank paper feeds through or you get pages with garbage printed on them.

First thing to check is the parallel port configuration. Go into the Bios Setup, and you will see that the parallel port configurations can be altered to Standard, ECP or EPP. You may need to try all the settings, but first try setting it to the same as your other PC. If this doesn't solve the problem, we would suspect the cable. The fact that it works on your other PC doesn't prove it isn't faulty, as the other PC's parallel port may simply be producing a clearer signal.

A switch box may be the most practical way to share your printer between two computers, but choose a good quality one. Remember to keep the cables short, and

make sure the printer is turned off before switching it over to avoid damaging the parallel port.

Q I want to use my new HP DeskJet 940c printer alongside my existing DeskJet 520, so I installed both units to my printer port using a manual data switch which I am sure is working correctly. Unfortunately, when I try to print on my old 520, the printout is corrupted. If I uninstall the 940c, the 520 prints perfectly, so the corruption has to have been caused by installing the 940c. Am I trying to achieve the impossible?

A Many newer printers have drivers that want to be in constant communication with the printer, whether or not you are printing to it. These drivers become confused if you use a switch box to connect two different printers to the same port, as they will try to talk to the printer regardless of which one is currently connected. The old printer won't understand the commands intended for the new one, and they will probably mess up the printout.

This is a common problem, and our advice is always to add a second parallel port so that each printer has its own permanent connection to the computer. Sometimes you can solve the problem by going into Bios Setup and switching the parallel port to Standard or EPP mode. These are older standards that only allow one-way communication. If your DeskJet 940c printer drivers accept this, they will not attempt to communicate with the printer except while you are printing, which may enable you to use your switch box successfully. However you will lose some functions, such as the ability to report on printer status, paper and ink levels.

↓ Windows

Q My Windows 98 system (migrated from Windows 3.1) is generally stable, so I see no reason to upgrade it. However, I note that you frequently advise a clean reinstall as a performance improver. I understand the logic of this, but my installation of Windows 98 has been significantly modified from the original by regular updates, patches and Service Packs, and a clean reinstall from my CD would mean downloading all these updates again. Is it really worth it?

A A clean reinstall is unlikely to have any significant effect on speed. However, it is the only way to get rid of some of the junk that builds up over time (especially if you're in the habit of trying out and then removing software – uninstallers aren't perfect). But if your hard disk isn't short of space why worry about it?

The most important benefit of a clean reinstall is that it will clear out obsolete or incorrect versions of system files and redundant or corrupt entries in the Registry that are so often the cause of system instability. If you are happy with the stability of your system, our advice is to leave it alone.

Q Recently, a virus infected my PC – McAfee found it in the kernel32.exe module in c:\Windows\System. The system seemed to recover when this module was put in the Recycle Bin,

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Help us solve your software conflicts

TIP

Recently, *Helpline* has seen a large increase in problems relating to internet access, such as 'The page cannot be displayed' and 'Cannot find server' error messages. Due to the fact that dialup web access using cheap ISPs is not inherently reliable, this may simply be normal – everyone receives these messages from time to time. However, it's possible that they could be caused by conflicts with firewalls and other security software that more and more people are installing. From the information you give us, however, we can't tell.

Please, when describing your problem, let us know what other software is running on your system at the time. Don't send lengthy system information printouts – a simple list of the products that are running will be fine.

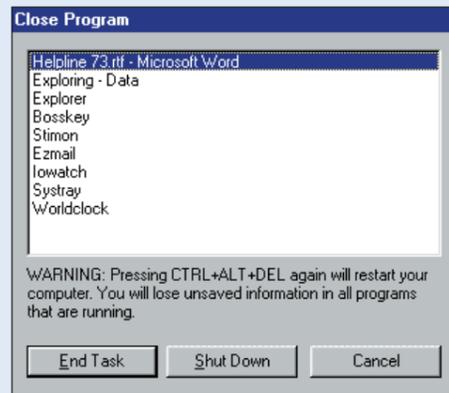
The Close Program dialog box (shown in the screenshot right) that comes up when you type

→ Use the Close Program dialog box to find out what programs you are running, as they may have a bearing on the problems you are having

Ctrl, Alt, Del will list everything that's currently active on your system.

Better still, see if you can solve your own problem by closing or disabling background utilities (ones that appear as icons in the System Tray). Software conflicts are also a common cause of problems, and a process of elimination is often the only way to resolve them.

If you do solve a software conflict by yourself, let us know by emailing the solution to pcadvisor_letters@idg.com. Remember to include the words 'Pass it on' in the title of the email so that we can tell other readers about your tip.



so I deleted it completely. I have now found that Acrobat Reader 5.0 fails to run due to 'Acro32' attempting an illegal operation. I suspect this to be caused by the absence of kernel32.exe, which means I need to reinstate a healthy version of it but there isn't one on my Windows CD. Can you help?

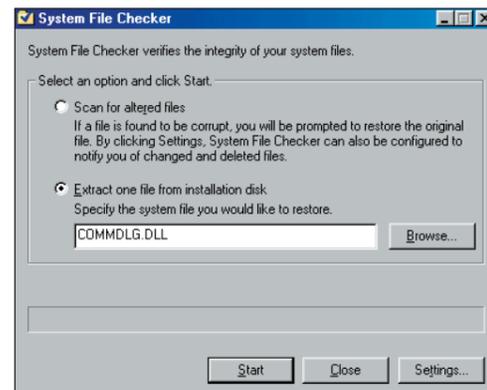
A We don't know why Acrobat Reader is failing, however it certainly isn't due to the missing kernel32.exe module. A trick used by some viruses is to hide themselves in files with names that sound as if they are a legitimate part of the system. In fact, the Windows operating system kernel file is kernel32.dll. There shouldn't be a kernel32.exe on your PC.

Q Windows 98 SE is continually throwing up the message 'Cannot find cmdmg.dll. Windows needs this to run'. This repeated interruption has made

my computer almost unusable. Where do I find the missing file, and how do I reinstall it?

A You can reinstall it from your Windows 98 SE CD using SFC (System File Checker). Click Start, Run, type sfc.exe and hit Enter. Select 'Extract one file from installation disk', type cmdmg.dll into the input box, then click Start (see screenshot right). Check that the location of your Windows CD is specified in the Restore from field of the next dialog box, then click ok. The file should then be restored to the correct location. You can restore any standard Windows file this way. (Under Windows Me use Msconfig instead of SFC.)

→ Use System File Checker to restore any missing Windows files under Windows 98



However, for vital system files like this there is an easier way to solve the problem. You should find a copy of the missing file in the folder c:\Windows\Sysbackup. Just copy this file to c:\Windows\System and the problem should be solved.

Q My PC has a small problem. The grey area at the bottom of the screen, containing the Start button, time and Quick Launch icons, has grown in size, and currently takes up more than half the area. I have autohide set, but when I place the mouse near the bottom of the screen, this grey area covers most of the desktop. How can I return it to its normal size?

A The grey area is called the Taskbar. Move the mouse to the bottom of the screen to bring it up, then move it to the top edge. The cursor will change to a little double-headed arrow, which means that you can resize it. Press and hold the lefthand mouse button, and drag the edge of the Taskbar down until it is the size you want. At some time you must have accidentally dragged it in the opposite direction to make it the size it is now.

Q I ran Defrag on my Windows 2000 laptop. Since then, however, I get the following message whenever I open any program: 'Explorer.exe has generated errors and will be closed by Windows. You will need to restart your program. An error log is being created'. What caused this error and how do I correct it?

A Explorer crashing when a program is opened is not a common problem. However, given that it started

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happening right after you defragged your hard disk, the most likely explanation is that something went wrong during the process and explorer.exe has been corrupted. If so, it might not be the only file that's affected, and there's no way to identify the corrupt files and repair them, even if you were able to run programs on the computer at the moment.

If you have a full system backup taken before defragging, restore it. If you only have backups of your data files, don't touch them. If you don't have backups at all, make copies of your data files, but bear in mind that they could be corrupted. If you haven't been able to run any programs, you probably haven't been able to open any files to see if they are ok. After you have saved your data, reformat your hard disk and reinstall Windows and your programs. This is the only way to be sure that all the files on your system are restored intact.

Q My PC has a 60GB hard drive, of which I use less than 10GB. When running ScanDisk for the first time, I kept getting the message 'ScanDisk has had to restart 10 times as something has written to the disk'. I phoned the PC manufacturer and was told to boot in Safe Mode, then run ScanDisk. It took 19 hours, but it finally reported no faults on the disk. I had similar problems with Defrag, so I ran it in Safe Mode, which took three hours. Why did both utilities take so long?

A Don't worry, everything is working as it should. It's always best to run ScanDisk and Defrag from Safe Mode when nothing else is running, and we would expect a thorough scan of a 60GB drive to take a long time as the test checks the whole disk, not just the part that's used. There's normally no need to run the thorough test unless you've received disk error messages that lead you to suspect that the drive may be damaged or faulty. For regular use, the standard ScanDisk is good enough (see screenshot below, right).

Q In Windows 98 SE the Copy Disk item has disappeared from the context menu that appears when I right-click the A drive. I tried the fix suggested in Microsoft's Knowledgebase, which was to rename and then replace from the Windows CD the file diskcopy.dll in the Windows System folder. This made no difference. Is there a way to reinstate it from the Registry?

A You're thinking on the right lines, as it's no good having a pristine copy of the DLL sitting on your

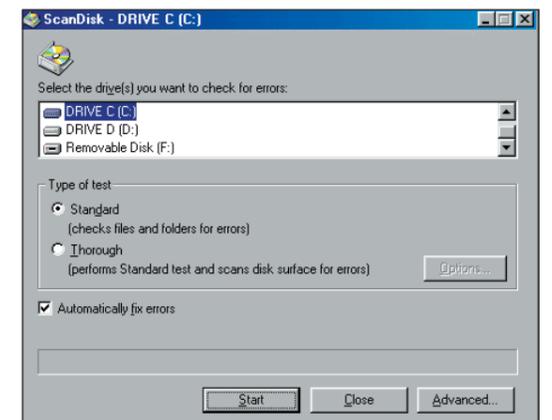
→ Run ScanDisk to check you are using your hard disk efficiently

hard drive if the relevant bits aren't there in the Registry to tell Windows to use it. The trouble with suggesting a fix is that we don't know what caused the Registry entry to disappear. Also, reinstating the missing entry will involve typing in long numbers.

We can solve the last problem with a REG file. You'll find diskcopy.reg on our cover disc; just double-click the file and click Yes when asked if you want to merge the contents of the file into the Registry. However, we can't guarantee what will happen if unexpected changes have been made to the Registry, rather than simply vital bits of information being missing. We strongly advise that you force a backup to be made using ScanReg, and that you know how to boot to a command prompt and restore the Registry from this backup if things go pear-shaped.

Q I am trying to install Windows XP on my computer, which fully meets the system requirements. When I boot it from the CD, it loads many different drivers and then says 'Setup is starting Windows'. A few seconds later this line is replaced with 'Processing Information File' and then 'There is a syntax error in the SIF file that Setup uses at line: 16040. Setup cannot continue. Shut down or restart your computer'. I have had the CD replaced and taken out all unnecessary hardware. A friend said it might be my Bios as it is quite old. Can you help?

A Syntax error is just a posh term for a mistake. It's reasonable to assume that Microsoft doesn't ship Windows XP CDs with errors on them, so the obvious conclusion is that the mistake has



Trojans vanquished

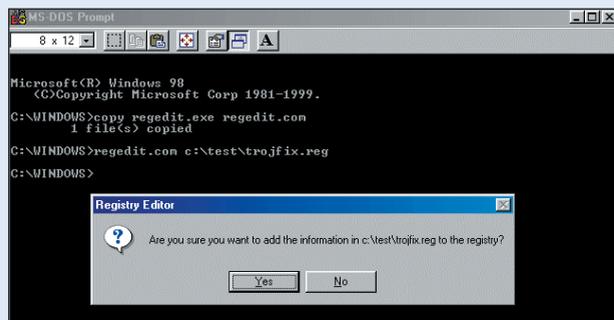


In February's *Helpline* we dealt with the problem of clearing up after an infection by the SirCam worm virus. This is when your antivirus software deletes the virus file without repairing the Registry, leaving you with a system that displays the error 'Windows cannot find sirc32.exe' whenever you try to run a program. Since then, we've been contacted by readers who have a similar error message, mentioning a different missing program after removing a virus.

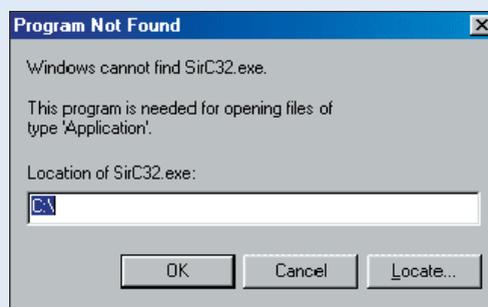
Besides SirCam, there are two less common worm viruses, Yarik and Stator, plus a fairly common Trojan, SubSeven, that activate themselves in the same way as SirCam – that is, by hooking into the process used to start an EXE file. After deleting the files belonging to one of these viruses or Trojans, you may find that Windows displays the message 'Windows cannot find xxx.exe' whenever you try to run a program, where xxx.exe is some program file other than the one you were intending to run. If this ever happens to you, we've developed a generic fix for it.

The fix is a simple REG file, trojfix.reg, which you'll find on the cover CD. To use trojfix.reg, you simply need to merge it into your Registry. It will replace the value stored in the Registry entry that tells Windows how to run EXE files (which was modified by the virus or Trojan) with the value it

↓ Once installed in your system's Registry, the file trojfix.reg (which is available on our cover disc) ensures that Windows is able to read all EXE files



→ The SirCam worm is not the only virus that causes damage to your PC by deleting an EXE file



is supposed to have. Copy this file to a floppy disk, where you can access it from your affected system.

If your computer runs Windows 95, 98 or Me, and you can't start Windows because of the problem, you can install the Registry fix from DOS. Boot your computer from a system disk or emergency recovery disk so you get to a command prompt, change to the c:\Windows directory, then type the command Regedit a:\Trojfix.reg. If successful, you should see a message advising you that the file has been merged into the Registry. When the command prompt returns, reboot the system and Windows should now work correctly.

If you can get into Windows, there's an easier way to apply the fix. Open a command prompt, check that you're in the Windows directory, then type the command Copy Regedit.exe Regedit.com. After the copy is done, type: Regedit.com a:\Trojfix.reg.

In the screenshot left, we copied the fix to the hard disk, so the path is c:\Test instead. A message box will pop up asking if you want to add the contents of the file to the Registry – click Yes. Another message box then informs you that the job has been done. Windows should now work correctly.

As the number of viruses and Trojans that use this method of infecting a computer will doubtless increase, we'd advise copying trojfix.reg to your emergency recovery disks, together with a note to remind you what it's for and what to do with it. You never know when you'll need it.

appeared because data has been misread from the CD. However, now you've replaced the CD it rules out that possibility.

An extensive search has revealed that this type of error is not unknown but, unfortunately, we could find no common solution. One article in the Knowledgebase relating to problems installing Windows XP on various IBM ThinkPads suggests that your friend might be correct. The ThinkPad Bios is unable to read large text files that are used during the setup process, resulting in an error. Others have got round the problem by booting from a floppy to start the install process.

↓ Applications

Q I have just taken delivery of a brand new PC running Windows XP Pro and Office XP Pro. How do I transfer my Outlook 2000 address book and emails from my old computer running Windows 98 SE to the new system's Outlook 2002?

A The answer is to back up the files on the old computer and restore them on the new one. However, as usual,

Microsoft seems to have treated this as an afterthought. It has developed an Outlook 2000-2002 backup add-on, but it isn't part of the installed package. Download it from <http://office.microsoft.com/downloads/2002/pfbackup.aspx> or find it on this month's cover disc. Install it by following the instructions which you'll also find on that web page.

Install the add-on on your old PC. Open Outlook and click the File menu – you should now see a Backup option. From this, you can choose which folders you want to back up, and where and how often you want them backed up. When you close

Outlook it will create a file named backup.pst and save it in the specified location. Make a copy of this file, then restore it using the same utility, which you'll need to install on the new PC as well. Open Outlook, select File, Backup, Restore backup. If you select the backup you just made, Outlook will import it as a new folder, while the existing inbox, outbox and so on will remain. You can then open the backup folder and copy or move the messages you want to a new location.

Even if you aren't planning to upgrade your system, it's still worth downloading this useful free add-on. It provides you with a convenient way to create a copy of your Outlook messages and address books that can easily be backed up, ready for any unexpected disasters.

Q Can I change the default settings of the Open, Save As dialog box from My Documents to Desktop?

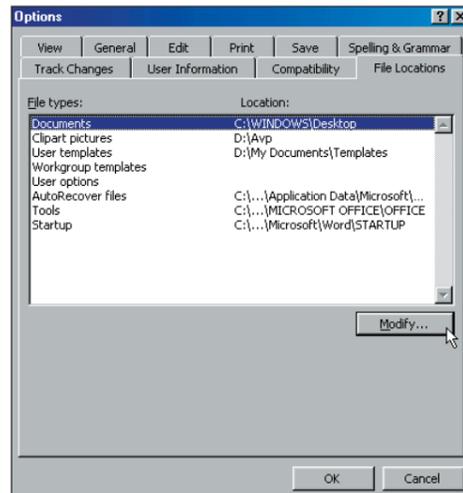
A Generally, you won't be able to. When Microsoft introduced the My Documents folder in Windows 95, it made it the default for all file

→ Microsoft Word allows you to change the default storage location for documents. For example, you could save files to the desktop

open and save operations, unless specifically overridden by the application programmer. You can only change the default location if the application you are using provides a setting that lets you change it. Word is among the programs that allows you to change the default document location. Simply click Tools, Options and selecting the File Locations tab (see the screenshot right).

Even if the application you are using doesn't allow you to change the default location, the desktop is only one click away using the Desktop button at the top of the dialog box.

Q A few weeks ago I upgraded my PC system, during which the supplier transferred much of my old data and applications for me, including Windows 98. As I still had the software



CDs for most of my previously installed programs I was able to reinstall almost everything I need, but I can't find Microsoft Word or Excel. I have Ability Office on my system, but I prefer the programs I am familiar with. How do I obtain Word and Excel? Do I have to buy a new copy of Windows 98 and, if so, would it be worth changing to Windows 2000 or XP instead?

Pass it on: tips from readers

TIP

Do you have any great workarounds or shortcuts you'd like to share? Send your tips and tricks to *Helpline, PC Advisor*, Fifth Floor, 85 Tottenham Court Road, London W1T 4TQ, or email pcadvisor_letters@idg.com. To help us sort your messages, please use the words 'Pass it on' in the subject heading.

Worm alert

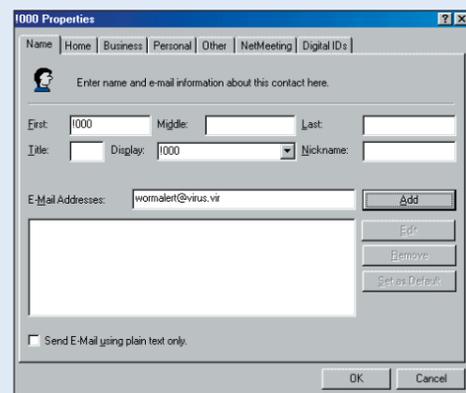
Brian Carroll passed on this worm virus prevention tip, and asked for our comments on it. He suggests creating a dummy entry in your address book with a name like !000 and a non-existent address like wormalert@virus.vir (see screenshot right). The name chosen will make this the first entry in the address book. When a worm virus activates, it usually tries to send copies to people whose addresses are in your address book. Therefore, when you receive an email saying that a message could not be delivered to the worm alert address, you'll know that a worm has infected your computer and can take steps to get rid of it.

We've seen this tip, or variants of it, quite a few times now. While it will do no harm, it isn't as useful as some people think. First, worm viruses often limit the number of copies they send, and they don't necessarily work their way through the address book in alphabetical order. So there's no guarantee that a worm will try to send itself to the dummy address, although there's a good chance it will.

Second, the worm won't give up sending copies to other addresses just because this one failed. The worm has no way of knowing whether an email that it sent reached the recipient or not. Third, some worms (such as last year's BadTrans virus) invalidate the sender address so you won't receive any undeliverable notifications for messages the worm sent.

Even a warning that works some of the time has its uses. But this suggestion is no substitute for keeping your antivirus software up to date and checking regularly for security patches for your mail software.

→ By making a dummy entry at the beginning of your address book, you might (though there's no certainty) create a makeshift virus alert



A If Word and Excel were on your previous system but you don't have the discs, Microsoft Office was probably bundled with the system. It is not part of Windows itself, so acquiring a new copy of Windows (any version) will not solve your problem. There may have been 'images' of the Microsoft Office install discs on your hard disk, from which you could make your own copies, but there is no chance of using them now that the hard disk has been reformatted.

Your only option is to buy a new copy of Microsoft Office, which won't be cheap. However, if you don't need the latest version, you'll find suppliers like Morgan Computers (www.morgancomputers.co.uk), SterlingXS (www.sterlingxs.co.uk) and Xtrasoft (www.xtrasoft.co.uk) often have older versions at lower prices. You might also consider Microsoft Works Suite, the latest version of which contains Microsoft Word. Alternatively, Corel WordPerfect Office has comparable functionality to Microsoft's Office suite – and it costs a fraction of the price.

Q Often when I try to close a file in Microsoft Word (running under Windows Me) I receive the error message: 'Winword has caused an error in wkwdaddn.dll. Winword will now close'. When I restart Word the following message pops up: 'Word automatically saved changes to the normal document template. Do you want to load it?' What is Winword and what am I doing wrong?

A You are doing nothing wrong. This seems to be quite a common error, and is caused by a software bug. Winword is the name of the executable program file for Microsoft Word, while wkwdaddn.dll is an add-in that is supposed to provide additional functionality for Microsoft Works



Contact us

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We regret that we cannot answer technical queries over the phone except via our Expert Advice Hotline on 0906 906 0272. Calls are charged at £1.50 per minute.

users. However, it appears to be the cause of your problem.

Using Find, Files and Folders on the Start menu, locate the file wkwdaddn.dll and rename it to wkwdaddn.xxx. Microsoft Word must not be running when you do this. By renaming the file, you'll prevent Microsoft Word from using it. This should stop these errors from occurring. If you miss the functionality that this add-in provided, however, you'll either have to live with the error or try to get an updated DLL from Microsoft.

Q When I try to run Microsoft Train Simulator, the message 'Your computer requires 4MB 3D hardware accelerator' appears. My system has a Cyrix 6x86MX processor but I can see nothing about 3D hardware accelerators. Can you suggest an inexpensive way to upgrade my processor?

A Your processor is just above the minimum required to run Microsoft Train Simulator. The hardware accelerator referred to in the error message is a graphics card – you need a 3D graphics accelerator card with a minimum of 4MB memory, compatible with the Microsoft Direct3D 7.0 API. Your retailer should be able to advise you of a suitable product that is compatible with your computer.

← If Windows can't find a program, something probably deleted it

Q I had two digital cameras installed on my computer, and recently uninstalled one of them. Since then, I haven't been able to view any photos. The thumbnail image is still displayed in Windows Explorer, but when I double-click an image I receive the message 'Program not found. Windows cannot find pictureviewer.exe'. When I click on Start, Programs, QuickTime for Windows, it's still there, so I haven't uninstalled anything. Can you help?

A If PictureViewer is still there, all you need to do is click the Locate button and navigate to the folder where the file is kept. If it's part of QuickTime for Windows, you'll find it under Program Files\QuickTime.

However, it's possible for a program to be deleted without its entry in the Start menu being removed (as shown in the screenshot left). You didn't say if the menu item for PictureViewer under QuickTime for Windows actually still worked. If it doesn't, then the uninstaller for the other camera probably removed it, and you'll have to reinstall it. You can download a new version from Apple's website, but it's quite a sizable file, so it would be worth checking all the applications and cover CDs you have as there's a good chance you'll find it on a separate folder on one of those.

Q I recently installed Windows XP Professional but find the Microsoft Imaging utility hopelessly inadequate compared to the Kodak Imaging software provided in Windows 98. Is it possible to install Kodak Imaging under XP from my

Stop those wicked scripts

TIP

Here's a neat utility that could safeguard your system from malicious script viruses. ScripTrap, a free download from <http://keir.net/scriptrap.html>, is available on this month's cover disc. It intercepts attempts to run a number of file types that can contain scripts, giving you the choice of allowing or preventing the script from running. There's an option to enable your virus checker to automatically check a script. Scripts that you know to be safe can also be added to a list so you aren't warned about them every time you run them.

ScripTrap will stop you from accidentally running a number of common script viruses. However, it doesn't appear to be able to trap scripts that are embedded in HTML-format mail messages, nor will it protect you from viruses that use binary executable files. You should still use a good antivirus package and be wary of unexpected emails containing strangely-named attachments.

Annoyingly, ScripTrap intercepts attempts to open DOC or XLS files, regardless of whether the file actually contains

→ ScripTrap will warn you if you inadvertently activate a script virus

macros. If you find this annoying, you can configure ScripTrap to only intercept files run from a temporary directory. This will catch scripts that try to run if you open an attachment directly from the email, but not if you save the attachment to a folder and open it later.



Windows 98 CD? I've tried copying the executables, together with some of the obviously related DLLs, into a folder under Windows XP. But when I run the executables I just keep getting error messages about further missing DLLs.

A While it's theoretically possible to achieve what you are attempting, it's practically impossible, as there's no easy way to locate all the needed files. Even if you did, registering all the ActiveX components in the Registry, and making all the other Registry entries necessary for the program to work correctly, would be extremely difficult to do.

Kodak Imaging should run under Windows XP, as it's available on Windows 2000. So a promising, if rather drastic way to try and get it running under XP would be to install Windows 98 and then do a Windows XP upgrade over the top of it.

Q I use Word 6.0 on Windows 95. When trying to save a document, I get the message 'Disk full trying to write to C drive. Free some space or save to another disk'. However, I cannot even save to the A drive. I must switch the PC off, restart and retrieve the recovered document. My hard disk has 432MB of space.

I was advised that the cause of this problem may be that the temporary folder is full. I deleted 7MB worth of TMP files

from c:\Windows\Temp. This worked for five weeks, but the message returned. I have another 1.1MB of TMP files, plus 4.2MB of various other files, which I kept. What can I do? Are the files in the temporary folder safe to delete?

A We assume that your hard drive has 432MB of free space. However, the fact that deleting temporary files solved the problem temporarily suggests that the disk might be full. You can certainly delete the other files from the temporary folder, but leave any that are shown as having been accessed today, in case something is still using them.

If you have a long or complex document – perhaps one that is made up of many subdocuments, or containing lots of embedded files – it's likely that there's a different problem. Word manages complex documents by creating temporary files for the various parts. Each file is referenced using a 'file handle'. Unfortunately, Windows 95, 98 and Me have a fixed limit on the number of file handles – in effect, the number of files that can be open on the system at one time.

In this situation, you can sometimes work round the problem by saving the document as RTF (rich text format) instead of Word format. Word 6.0 handles the situation more gracefully – it works out how many file handles are needed before

it starts to save the file, and allows you to take remedial action such as collapsing subdocuments into the master document so that you don't lose any work.

You can free up more file handles by closing anything else that may be running on your system, or you can simplify your documents. But ultimately, if this is your problem, you need to upgrade to Windows XP (which doesn't have a fixed file handle limit) and a newer version of Word.

Q When I try to run Word 2000 I receive a message saying that there are insufficient resources to open Word. I tried moving the date back to when it last worked, uninstalling and reinstalling it – all to no avail. What should I do?

A Unfortunately, setting the date back won't reset the system to the state it was in on that date. It only changes the time. Something you have done since then – some program you have installed, perhaps – has caused the problem, and you need to identify what it is.

One of the programs you are running is using the needed resources, so try shutting down all other applications, then start closing the programs that run in the System Tray until you get to the point where Word will run. You might also find that reducing the display resolution or the



← IE5 Address Bar Editor lets you customise the entries in the address bar drop-down list

closed when you make changes, or it will overwrite them.

In answer to your second question, the Internet Explorer address bar only seems to store addresses you type in.

Other sites that you visit appear in the History list, accessed by clicking on the History button.

number of colours used, or disabling desktop wallpaper or the Active Desktop, may also work.

Office 2000 is the biggest resource hog, while Windows 95, 98 and Me all place a limit on the amount of resources available. This has nothing to do with the amount of memory in the PC, by the way. The only way to break free of this irritating restriction is to move up to Windows XP.

Internet

Q My computer runs Windows Me and Internet Explorer 5.5. Is it possible to edit the websites that are displayed in the drop-down list of the Internet Explorer address bar? I believe it's easy to delete all of them but I only want to delete individual ones.

I also sometimes find that, having visited a site, its address isn't showing on the drop-down list when I want to go back to that site again. Is there a reason why it isn't there?

A The answer to your first question is easy. Download the free IE5 Address Bar Editor (as shown in screenshot above) from www.freesoft.fsnet.co.uk/ie/edit01.htm, or install it from our cover disc. It does exactly what you need and is an essential accessory for any IE user.

There are no instructions bundled with the program, and its no-frills interface is a bit lacking in visual feedback. You need to click an item twice (but not double-click it) before you can edit it or, using the Delete key, delete it. You can also drag and drop URLs to alter their positions. One point to note when using the Address Bar Editor: make sure Internet Explorer is

Q I am looking for a business email address and internet provider. I want to keep the two separate so that I can change my ISP, if and when I want to, without having to change my email address. I don't want to be held captive as I was with my business telephone number, being unable to change supplier without changing phone number.

A You need your own domain, for example yourbusiness.co.uk or perhaps (since so many desirable .co.uk names are now taken) yourbusiness.biz. There are many companies that let you register a domain for as little as £10 for two years – you can also purchase it online, paying by credit card. They provide no mail or web servers. Instead, they forward mail and (if you want it) web accesses to an address at your internet provider. This means that you can choose any internet provider you like and, when you want to switch, you simply change your domain's forwarding address at the company you registered it with.

One such service you could try is FreeParking (www.freeparking.co.uk) as shown in the screenshot right. FreeParking has a web-based interface that lets you manage the forwarding yourself. You can forward mail for up

→ FreeParking – an easy way to acquire your own net domain and manage it yourself

to 10 different usernames at your domain to 10 different ISP email addresses if you wish. This would allow you to set up each user with their own ISP account, perhaps using a free ISP like Freeserve.

If you have more email users than this, you probably need a more sophisticated solution to your problem anyway. From FreeParking's site, you can quickly find out if the domain name you'd like to use for your business is available.

Q I installed ZoneAlarm from February's cover disc, and it has registered several attempts to access my computer. From the log, I traced some of the addresses, and in one instance it was the IRS (America's Inland Revenue Service). Why would they be indulging in such activities?

A Firewall logs' efficiency can cause a lot of unnecessary worry, and it's usually best to just let them get on with their job. There are a couple of reasons why some of the apparent access attempts you see appear to come from domains you would expect to be trustworthy.

One is that, as a dialup internet user, you are using a numeric web address that until a few moments ago was in use by a different user. That user either hung up or lost the connection while they were still connected to a server, in which case the server may continue resending messages to the address, which now points to your computer. This does no harm. As your computer doesn't open a connection to that server, it simply ignores the messages.

Another reason is that more advanced hackers learn how to 'spoof' their internet address so that their attacks appear to come from somewhere else. When they



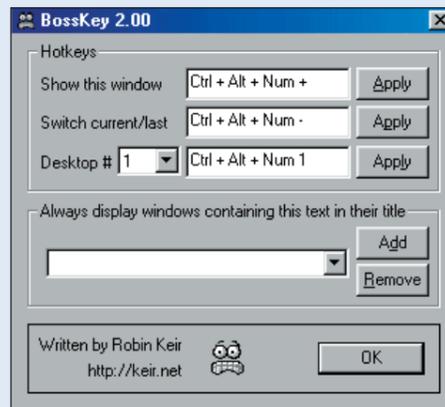
Use multiple desktops

TIP

Is your Windows desktop cluttered? Do you often have to close applications so you can have a clear desktop to do something else? Then try **BossKey**, a free desktop switcher that is available on this month's cover disc. Alternatively, download the tiny zip file from <http://keir.net> and unzip the contents to a suitable folder – `c:\Program Files\BossKey`, for example. Then run the program `bosskey.exe` as shown in the screenshot right.

As supplied, the program uses the keys **Ctrl** and the numeric '+' (the large plus key) to call up its configuration window, and **Ctrl** and the numeric '-' to switch between desktops. You can switch to specific desktops (up to 10 of them) using **Ctrl, 0** to **Ctrl, 9**, where 0 to 9 are the keys on the numeric keypad. Before this will work, however, you need to follow the instructions in the text file that accompanies the program exactly.

→ Using **BossKey** you can spread your work out over multiple desktops



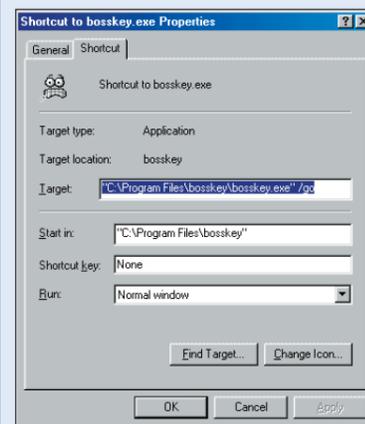
Select desktop 0 from the drop-down list and click in the box where the hotkey is shown. Press **Ctrl**, then **0** and click **Apply**. Never mind that the box already says 'Ctrl + Num 0'. If you fail to go through

← You can set `bosskey.exe` to run from each startup with a simple shortcut in the StartUp folder

all these steps, the hotkey won't work. The process must be repeated each time for as many desktops as you want to use.

You'll probably find that **Ctrl, 1** (being the same as **Ctrl, End**) conflicts with the keystroke used to move to the end of a file in most text editors. So you may find it better to redefine all the keystrokes to use **Ctrl, Alt**, something instead. Note too that **BossKey** doesn't let you change the desktop background or the icons that appear on the desktop, only the applications that are visible, and their Taskbar icons. But what do you expect from such a tiny program, anyway?

To have **BossKey** run automatically at startup, drag a shortcut from it to the StartUp folder of your Start menu, then edit the shortcut's properties and add the switch '/go' to the end of the command line in the Target field (see screenshot left).



do this, they often choose an address belonging to a trusted organisation. That's probably what happened in your case.

Q Whenever I start Outlook Express I receive the error message: 'The Address Book failed to load. Outlook Express is incorrectly configured, please reinstall'. What is the solution?

A This error occurs if invalid information is stored in certain Registry locations. The solution involves performing some fairly drastic surgery on the Registry, so start by making a backup. Once you've done that, uninstall Outlook Express using Add/Remove Programs in Control Panel.

Run the Registry Editor, `RegEdit`. Open these Registry folders: `Hkey_Users`, `Default`, `Software`, `Microsoft`. Delete the folder named Outlook Express and the one named `WAB`. Close `Hkey_Users`, then open

`Hkey_Local_Machine`, `Software`, `Microsoft` and delete the folder named `WAB`. Now reinstall Outlook Express, and you should find your address book is there in its correct place.

Q I run Windows 98 and have recently upgraded to AOL 7.0. The installation went perfectly until the message: 'Installation Successful – Reboot Now?' appeared. On rebooting I got a desktop with no Start button or program icons, only the wallpaper. It's now unusable and I cannot access my files. This is very serious as I run a small business from this computer. AOL's support has been useless, and they won't accept responsibility. How can I get to my data and restart my system?

A As we don't have specific knowledge of AOL's software we can't help with getting that working. We'll focus on

trying to restore access to your files, however we must start by saying that it is extremely irresponsible not to have backups of all your important files, if not of the system itself. You should always back up before installing new software or an upgrade.

Lecture over – now the good news. It's unlikely that AOL 7.0 has actually trashed your hard disk, so if all else fails you should be able to boot to a command prompt using your Emergency Recovery Disk and copy off your data files that way. If you don't have an Emergency Recovery Disk, try pressing and holding the **Ctrl** key during startup, which should bring up the Windows 98 StartUp Menu. You can then choose Command Prompt from the list of options.

From this menu, you can also choose Safe Mode. If you can get into Windows this way, you may be able to resolve the problem by disabling Active Desktop

Virus alert: don't come to Myparty

TIP

A new worm virus that spreads as an email attachment was discovered at the end of January. Though programmed to spread only between 25 and 29 January, and therefore no longer a threat, it's worth warning about because it uses a new way of fooling the recipient into opening the infected attachment. Other viruses that exploit this idea will doubtless have appeared by the time you read this.

The worm spreads as an email containing an attachment named `www.myparty.yahoo.com`. In many mail programs this attachment will look like a hyperlink to a website, and many

recipients will click on it. However, '.com' is also the file extension of a type of executable file – `www.myparty.yahoo.com` is actually a perfectly valid filename and Windows will execute the file if you open it, infecting your computer with the worm.

As we've said before, your best defence against worms – besides a good, up-to-date antivirus package – is to treat with suspicion any unexpected emails that invite you to open an attachment. If a message contains a hyperlink that's in an attachment rather than the body of the message, be very suspicious of it indeed.

(if this is enabled, it may be the cause of your problem) or by uninstalling AOL 7.0.

If you can't solve the problem in Safe Mode, try reinstalling Windows. If you reinstall it over the existing setup, it may solve the problem and get you back into the system without requiring you to reinstall your applications. If not, you're going to have to reformat and reinstall everything from scratch. Without knowing exactly what AOL 7.0 has done to your computer it's impossible to offer a less drastic remedy.

Q I am having trouble emailing my son in America. There is no problem using his work address, but I can't send to his new home address. He has sent mail to me from this address, but whether I use the 'Reply to sender' facility or type the address into a new message, after sending the message it is returned. The report states that: 'The following addresses had permanent fatal errors... reason: 550 Invalid recipient <xxxxxxx@mediaone.net>'. My ISP says that there is nothing it can do. Can you help?

A Your ISP's response is reasonable in the circumstances. This error message means that the destination address does not exist, and in 99 percent of cases this is finger trouble on the part of either the sender or recipient. The fact that you receive mail apparently from this address proves nothing. There is usually no validation on the address in the From or Reply to fields of a message. If your son mistyped his new address when setting up his email software, he would still be able to send mail using the

incorrect address, although any reply would bounce with the '550 Invalid recipient' error.

If your son can confirm that the address is correct, and that mail from other people is getting through, you need to get back to your ISP's support desk with this information and ask them to make more of an effort. Your ISP is probably using address validation, so the error could occur if its mail server is failing to receive confirmation from your son's ISP that his address exists. This could be because your son's ISP's domain name server is temporarily offline (in which case the problem has hopefully

resolved itself by now), or perhaps it is too slow to respond.

It's best if technicians from the two ISPs talk to each other to find out what is happening because, if this error occurs with an email address that is definitely valid, only the ISPs can solve the problem.

Q I have a recurring problem when trying to connect to a server. I get online okay, but then receive the white 'unable to find server' screen. Neither your telephone helpline nor a local engineer could help. I reformatted the hard drive, which worked for a week. I eventually discovered the solution to a

Windows' little helper

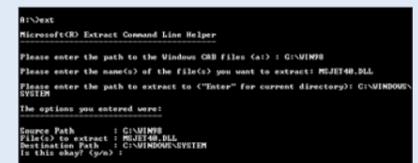
TIP

If you need to replace a missing or corrupted Windows system file, it's easiest to do it from Windows using SFC (System File Checker) in Windows 98, or `Msconfig` in Windows Me. These utilities know where system files are supposed to go, and should be able to cope with replacing files that are in use by Windows. If Windows won't start, though, and you need to replace a file to get it going, you need Windows' little helper.

The helper is on the startup disk you create from Control Panel, Add/Remove Programs, under Windows 98 or Me. Boot from the startup disk and it creates a RAM disk (a virtual disk, created in memory) containing recovery tools. One of these tools is `ext.exe`, the Microsoft Extract Command Line Helper (as shown above).

At the command prompt, type `EXT` and hit **Enter**. The program will ask for the path to the Windows CAB files (this will be `d:\Win98` if you are using Windows 98 and your CD-ROM drive is `D`), the names of the files you want to extract, and the path to extract them to (such as `c:\Windows\System`). It will then search all the CAB files on the CD, extracting new copies of the files you specified.

Please note that `EXT` isn't usually available from a command prompt under Windows. To make it available, open the file `ebd.cab` (on your startup disk) in Windows Explorer, and drag a copy of `ext.exe` to your `C` drive Windows folder.

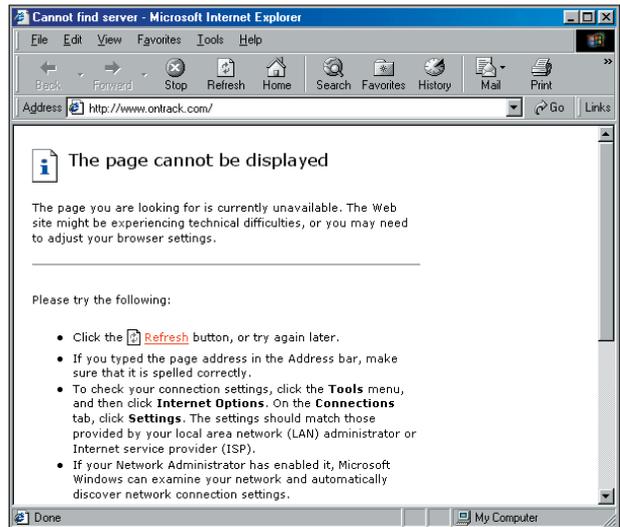


similar problem in October's *Helpline* (pages 179-180), which led me to delete a certain cookie and all extra copies of wsock32.dll. However, the problem continues to reappear. One thing I do notice is that only 'www' appears along the browser status bar, not the usual 'http://www'. Is that a clue?

A We've seen this happen when using a late, unlamented, unmetered ISP whose DNS (domain name server) was notoriously unreliable. The October *Helpline* answer covers all the likely causes of this common problem (including DNS problems) while the Microsoft Knowledgebase article referred to covers most of the unlikely ones. We're suspicious of your ability to collect strange cookies and extra wsocks. If you have checked the points we mentioned, or have a fresh Windows installation and still have problems, the matter lies with your ISP.

→ This familiar error message may indicate a transient problem. Try clicking Refresh

It's possible that Windows can report to an application that it has an internet connection when the connection isn't yet fully functioning. If you habitually start your web connection by launching your browser, this may result in the 'unable to find server' or 'page not found' error message for the first access attempt. It may also give a similar message if you start the connection using Outlook Express. If you wait a few seconds and then try again (if using the browser, click



Refresh – see screenshot above) you may find that the page is found successfully on the second attempt. This is really an ISP problem, and there isn't anything you can do about it.

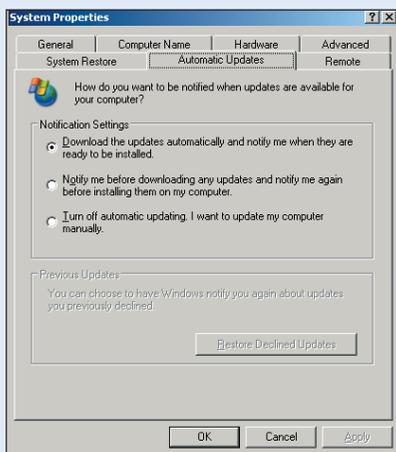
We've also noticed a similar problem occurring randomly during normal browsing. Again, clicking Refresh often brings up the missing page on the second attempt. What is probably happening is that the server is busy, so it refuses access. If you try again when it's slightly less busy, you'll see the page you expect.

Automatic updates in Windows XP

TIP

Windows XP has a more sophisticated form of automatic updating than Windows 98 and Windows Me. By default, it will download relevant updates automatically without asking, and tell you when it is ready to install them. While it's a good idea to install these updates – many of them will be security updates that will prevent your system from getting and spreading viruses – some updates can be quite big, and could tie up your web connection for hours. You may, therefore, prefer to have more control over the process.

To change the automatic update settings, open Control Panel, System and select the Automatic Updates tab (shown in the screenshot below). Select 'Notify me before downloading any updates and notify me again before installing them on my computer'. You can choose not to download the update, or ask Windows to remind you later. If you choose not to take the update, but decide that you need it later, you can have



↑ You may prefer to be told about any updates before Windows starts to download them

Windows ask again about updates you previously declined by clicking the Restore Declined Updates button.

If you want an update but it is a large download, you can start downloading it then pause it by clicking the Automatic Updates icon in the notification area of the Taskbar and selecting Pause. To resume the update later, click the icon and select Resume.

If you prefer to take full control over your Windows XP updates, choose 'Turn off automatic updating. I want to update my computer manually.' If you choose this option, you can get updates by selecting Windows Update from the Start menu, under Help and Support Center.

Q I am trying to send my daughter an email attachment. Because she has a Hotmail account I have configured Outlook Express to break the attachment down into 500KB sections. Unfortunately, when the message arrives, her Outlook Express is not recombining the sections back into one message so she cannot open the attachment successfully. Can you help us solve this problem?

A It sounds as if you are expecting Outlook Express to combine the messages automatically – which it won't do. You have to tell it what to do. Select all the parts of the message in the right order by holding down Ctrl and clicking on the subject lines. Then select Combine and Decode from the Message menu. The result will be displayed in a new window. ■

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